

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-05

L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 COME-00 EB-07 LAB-01 SIL-01 SAM-01 SAI-01

NIC-01 CU-02 /079 W

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R 291623Z NOV 74

FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 546

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

AMEMBASSY VIENNA

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 7491

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: ELAB, SP

SUBJECT: SPANISH STRIKE AND LABOR SITUATION

REF (A) MADRID 7024; (B) MADRID 6822

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. CONFLICTIVE SPANISH FALL LABOR SCENE CONTINUES, WITH STRIKE ACTIVITY CENTERED IN BARCELONA, MADRID, BASQUE, PROVINCES, AND VALLADOLID. DURING PAST TWO WEEKS LABOR SCENE HAS WITNESSED (A) ACTIVE INTRUSION OF CHURCH BY MADRID AUXILIARY BISHOP AND BARCELONA CARDINAL IN SUPPORT OF WORKER DEMANDS; (B) NOV 18 STATEMENT BY GOVT-CONTROLLED NATIONAL WORKERS COUNCIL OF SPANISH SYNDICAL ORGANIZATION (SSO) APPEALING TO GOVT FOR VARIOUS LABOR
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REFORMS INCLUDING GRANTING OF MMODIFIED RIGHT TO STRIKE; AND (C)

NOV 28 TRIAL OF 14 WORKERS AND 2 PRIESTS FOR WORKERS COMMISSIONS ACTIVITY IN VALENCIA. DOMINANT COMMUNIST ELEMENTS IN WORKERS COMMISSIONS IN SOME AREAS HAVE REPORTEDLY ACTED AS MODERATING FORCE ON WORKERS TO DISSUADE THEM FROM STRIKING (WHOLE NON-COMMUNIST GROUPS APPEAR TO BE PRINCIPAL ELEMENTS POLITICIZING STRIKES), WHILE DEMOCRATIC CLANDESTINE UGT AND USO ARE BASKING IN PRESTIGE DUE TO RECENT VISITS TO SPAIN OF ICFTU'S OTTO KERSTEN AND IMF'S HERMAN REBHAN AND DANIEL BENEDICT. PROSPECTS ARE FOR MORE STRIKES AND LABOR AGITATION UNTIL AT LEAST NEXT FEB. END SUMMARY.

2. LABOR SCENE CONTINUES BE MARKED BY MUCH STRIKE ACTIVITY LARGELY ECONOMIC IN ORIGIN, BUT FREQUENTLY RAPIDLY POLITICIZED BY CLANDESTINE LABOR GROUPS.

3. DURING RECENT WEEKS MOST PROMINENT STRIKE ACTIVITY HAS BEEN AT 26,000 WORKER SEAT AUTO FACTORY IN BARCELONA. INTERMITTENT STRIKES AT SEAT OVER CONTRACT ISSUES BECAME RAPIDLY POLITICIZED AND LED TO SEVERAL INCIDENTS IN WHICH GROUPS OF STRIKERS AND THEIR SUPPORTERS HELD VIOLENT CONFRONTATIONS WITH POLICE IN SCATTERED BARCELONA LOCATIONS, MOST NOTABLY IN DOWNTOWN VICINITY OF BARCELONA SSO OFFICES. THESE STRIKES AND PROTEST ACTIONS LED TO A MASS LOCKOUT BY SEAT OF PLANT'S 18,000 INDUSTRIAL WORKERS FOR ONE WEEK. WHEN WORKERS RETURNED TO WORK NOV 18 THEY IMMEDIATELY RECOMMENDED STRIKE ACTIVITY. IN MEANTIME, LABOR MINISTRY INTERVENED IN SEAT DISPUTE BY HANDING DOWN NOV 15 COMPULSORY ARBITRATION DECISION IMPOSING TERMS OF NEW CONTRACT. NEW GOVT-DICTATED CONTRACT APPEARS TO FAVOR SLIGHTLY SEAT WORKERS AND PROVIDES FOR INCREASED WAGES INCLUDING COST OF LIVING ESCALATOR PLUS ACROSS-THE-BOARD INCREASE OF APPROX \$35 PER MONTH EACH WORKER. SEAT WORKERS CONTINUED TO STRIKE INTERMITTENTLY BUT NORMALITY AND FULL REINTEGRATION OF WORK FORCE AT SEAT IS REPORTED THIS WEEK, AND IT APPEARS STRIKE MAY HAVE FINALLY ENDED.

4. STRIKE ACTIVITY HAS ALSO CONTINUED ELSEWHERE, INCLUDING (A) AT CASA AIRCRAFT CONSTRUCTION AND REPAIR FACILITY AT GETAFE NEAR MADRID (WHERE USAF F-4 PHANTOMS ARE OVERHAULED). WHICH ALSO ERUPTED INTO SOME STREET MANIFESTATIONS IN GETAFE, BUT WHICH APPEARS TO HAVE ENDED WITH WORKERS NOW BACK AT WORK; (B) AT A FEW OTHER FACTORIES IN MADRID AREA SUCH AS SIEMENS PLANT; (C) AT VARIOUS FACTORIES IN BARCELONA SUCH AS OLIVETTI TYPEWRITER PLANT; (D) AT FASA-RENAULT AUTOMOBILE PLANT IN VALLADOLID WHERE EARLIER STRIKE, WHICH

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WAS CONSIDERED TERMINATED, WAS REACTIVATED WHEN COMPANY ANNOUNCED MEASURES TO LAY OFF SOME OF THEIR WORK FORCE IN WAKE OF MYSTERIOUS OCT 30 FIRE WHICH DESTROYED PART OF FACTORY AND KILLED 10 WORKERS; (E) AT A LARGE NUMBER OF FIRMS IN PAMPLONA AREA WHERE EXTENSIVE STRIKE ACTIVITY HAS COMMENCED IN RECENT DAYS (ON NOV 28, 300 STRIKERS ATTEMPTED OCCUPY PAMPLONA SSO OFFICES BUT WERE DISLODGED AND EVICTED BY POLICE); (F) AT VARIOUS SOCIAL SECURITY HOSPITALS THROUGHOUT SPAIN WHERE MEDICAL INTERNS CONTINUE TO PRESS UNRESOLVED

DEMANDS FOR REFORMS, (G) AT A NUMBER OF FACTORIES IN BASQUE COUNTRY; AND (H) AMONG BANK WORKERS NATIONWIDE.

5. MORE ACTIVE CHURCH INTERVENTION HAS ALSO COMMENCED. ON NOV 17 AN AUZILIARY BISHOP OF MADRID HAD READ IN CHURCHES IN GETAFE AREA HOMOLY SUPPORTING DEMANDS OF STRIKING CASA WORKERS FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE. MORE IMPORTANTLY, CARDINALY JUBANY OF BARCELONA ON NOV 24 ISSUED PASTORAL LETTER ALLUDING TO STRIKES IN BARCELONA AREA BLAMING PRIMARILY SPANISH AUTHORITIES AND INSTITUTIONS FOR CONFLICTIVE BARCELONA LABOR SCENE. HE ALSO CALLED FOR: (A) AN "AUTHENTIC" DIALOGUE BETWEEN WORKERS AND EMPLOYERS; (B) SOME FORM OF RECOGNITION OF RIGHT TO STRIKE; AND (C) REDUCTION IN THE ECONOMIC DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PRIVILEGED CLASSES AND MASSES.

6. EVEN GOVT-CONTROLLED SSO HAS FELT NEED TO PRONOUNCE ITSELF, AND SSO'S NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WORKERS, ON NOV 18, ISSUED A FORM OF MANIFESTO CALLING FOR GOVT TO GRANT GREATER REPRESENTIVITY AND SYNDICAL FREEDOMS. THIS SOMEWHAT SURPRISING STATEMENT INCLUDED, INTER ALIA, APPEALS FOR (A) NEW AND MORE REPRESENTATIVE LABOR LEGISLATION; (B) HUMANIZATION OF WORK ENVIRONMENT; (D) FIRM ACTION BY GOVT AGAINST IMPROPER DISMISSALS; AND (E) MOST IMPORTANTLY, FOR GOVT TO ENACT LEGISLATION TO REGULATE AND PERMIT MODIFIED RIGHT TO STRIKE. SSO'S COUNCIL OF WORKERS ACTION IN CALLING FOR THESE LIBERALIZING MEASURES, DESPITE FACT GOVT IS UNLIKELY TO GRANT MOST OF THEM, CAN BE VIEWED PARTIALLY AS AN EFFORT BY SSO TO IMPROVE ITS RELATIVELY UNPOPULAR IMAGE AMONG WORKERS WITH VIEW TO FORTHCOMING NATIONWIDE SSO SHIP STEWARD ELECTIONS NEXT SPRING.

7. RE CLANDESTINE LABOR OPPOSITION GROUPS, THIS YEAR, FOR FIRST TIME, NON-COMMUNIST GROUPS OUTSIDE WORKERS COMMISSIONS, SUCH AS SOCIALIST UGT AND CATHOLIC-INSPIRED USO, AS WELL AS NON-COMMUNIST PARTICIPANTS INSIDE WORKERS COMMISSIONS, SUCH AS EXTREMIST CATHOLIC ORT, HAVE BEEN PRINCIPAL GROUPS POLITICIZING. STRIKES. ON OTHER
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HAND, EMB LABATT HAS BEEN TOLD BY VARIOUS CLANDESTINE LABOR SOURCES THAT DOMINANT COMMUNIST (PCE) ELEMENTS IN WORKERS COMMISSIONS ARE, IRONICALLY, IN SOME AREA PLAYING MODERATING ROLE AND HAVE EVEN ON NUMBER OF OCCASIONS SOUGHT TO DISSUADE WORKERS FROM STRIKING, A REVERSAL OF PREVIOUS PRACTICE. THIS APPARENT SURPRISING CHANGE BY DOMINANT PCE ELEMENTS IN WORKERS COMMISSIONS CAN PERHAPS ONLY BE EXPLAINED BY CURRENT DESIRE OF PCE SEC GEN SANTIAGO CARRILLO IN PARIS TO ACHIEVE MODERATE AND RESPONSIBLE IMAGE IN SPAIN, AS IS PCE'S GOAL AT POLITICAL LEVEL IN JUNTA DEMOCRATICA COALITION WHICH CARRILLO AND CERTAIN OPPOSITION GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS HAVE FORMED. SOME SOURCES ALSO BELIEVE PCE-DOMINATED WORKERS COMMISSIONS MAY BE GRADUALLY SUFFERING DECLINE AT HANDS OF BOTH MORE EXTREMISTS LEFTIST GROUPS (WHICH IN SOME CITIES HAVE FORMED THEIR OWN RIVAL AUTNOMOUS WORKERS COMMISSIONS INDEPENDENT OF PCE CONTROL) AS WELL AS OF DEMOCRATIC CLANDESTINE LABOR GROUPS

SUCH AS UGT AND USO.

8. MODERATE UGT AND USO ARE NOW BASKING IN PRESTIGE WHICH RECENT OCT VISITS TO SPAIN OF ICFTU SEC GEN OTTO KERSTEN, AND OF IMF SEC GEN HERMAN REBHAN ACCOMPANIED BY IMF ASST. SEC GEN DANIEL BENEDICT, HAVE GIVEN TO THESE ICFTU (IN CASE OF UGT) AND IMF (BOTH US AND UGT) AFFILIATES.

9. TRIALS OF CLANDESTINE LABOR LEADERS ALSO APPEAR TO BE INCREASING. AS INDICATED REF B, TRIAL OF FIVE NATIONAL UGT LEADERS SCHEDULED FOR OCT 28 WAS POSTPONED AT LAST MINUTE, REPORTEDLY BECAUSE OF THE INTERNATIONAL PRESSURES IT BEGAN TO GENERATE (THIS POSTPONED TRIAL WAS PRINCIPAL REASON FOR PRESENCE OF OTTO KERSTEN IN MADRID ON THAT DATE). ON NOV 28, A TRIAL OF 14 VALENCIA WORKERS COMMISSIONS LEADERS (MANY, IF NOT MOST, OF WHOM ARE REPORTEDLY COMMUNIST AND ONE OF WHOM IS A WOMAN) AND TWO JESUIT PRIESTS WAS HELD ON CHARGES RELATING TO ARREST OF 16 AT A WORKERS COMMISSIONS MEETING IN VALENCIA IN 1970. PROSECUTOR IS ASKING FOR SENTENCES OF FROM 5 TO 12 YEARS FOR ACCUSED, WHO ARE CHARGED WITH "ILLEGAL PROPAGANDA" AND ILLICIT ASSOCIATION" IN WORKERS COMMISSIONS. THIS TRIAL WAS HELD IN MADRID'S PUBLIC ORDER COURT BEHIND CLOSED DOORS BECAUSE OF INVOLVEMENT OF TWO PRIESTS AND PURSUANT TO CLAUSE OF CONCORDAT WHICH STIPULATES THAT TRIALS INVOLVING PRIESTS SHOULD NOT BE PUBLIC. TRIAL REPORTEDLY ENDED SAME DAY, BUT VERDICTS AND SENTENCING ARE NOT EXPECTED FOR ANOTHER WEEK.

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10. PROSPECTS ARE FOR A CONTINUATION OF STRIKES AND LABOR UNREST AT LEAST UNTIL FEB, INASMUCH AS MANY COLLECTIVE BARGAINING CONTRACTS EXPIRE DEC 31 AND NEGOTIATIONS, FREQUENTLY PUNCTUATED BY STRIKES ARE CURRENTLY IN PROGRESS. AT SAME TIME GOVT-CONTROLLED SSO IS BEGINNING FOCUS ITS ATTENTION, WITH SOME TREPIDATION, ON FORTHCOMING SSO SPRING ELECTIONS, WHICH MOST CLANDESTINE LABOR GROUPS ALSO PLAN TO PARTICIPATE IN TO SEEK SUBVERT SSO FROM WITHIN.
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